Roosevelt Base, Central Heating Plant
(Building No. 4)
Corner of Colorado Street and Reeves Avenue
~~Naval Station Long Beach~~
Long Beach
Los Angeles
California

HABS No. CA-2663-C

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOSEVELT BASE, CENTRAL HEATING PLANT (Building No. 4)

HABS No. CA-2663 -C

Location: Corner of Colorado Street and Reeves Avenue, Naval Station Long Beach,
Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator

Coordinates: 11.385350.3735400

Present Owner: Naval Shipyard, Long Beach

Original Use: Heating Plant

Present Use: Vacant since 1995

Significance: The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, architectural style, and its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** Building 4 was completed in 1942 (Nav. S. and A. Form 277) as part of Contract NOy 4279.

2. **Architect:** The architects were Adrian Wilson, chief architect, and Paul R. Williams, associate architect, of the "Allied Engineers Inc., Architects and Engineers", a Los Angeles firm, whose project design team also included Donald R. Warren, chief engineer; S.B. Barnes, structural engineer, E.L. Ellingwood, mechanical engineer.

3. **Original and subsequent owners:** The U.S. Navy bought a strip of 105 acres along Seaside Boulevard for $1.00 from the City of Long Beach in 1940. The adjacent harbor was dredged and additional 177 acres were added to the original. Roosevelt Base, including Building 4, was constructed on this fill. In 1994 the Station was closed and ownership resides with the U.S. Navy Southwest Division, in San Diego.

4. **Builder contractor:** The contractors were Guy F. Atkinson of San Francisco and George Pollock of Sacramento, who joined forces and opened a local office for this large contract.

5. **Original plans and construction:** Built in 1942 for $72,054.09, this heating plant provided steam heat for the berthed ships as well as for the buildings. The original drawing, #35396, dated May 6, 1941, showed a machine room wing to the east. This was not built. The original plans are on file in Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

6. **Alterations and additions:** A boiler room addition was added to the west in 1956. See drawings #35339, 35349, 35350, 35362, and 35363. George E. Nicholson on Long Beach was the Engineer.

B. Historical Context.

The construction of a central heating plant, Building 4, was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet, anchored in San Pedro harbor. The construction of the recreation complex was part of a nationwide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy through Allied Engineers hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost $18 million funded by congressional appropriations. Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233) and tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and

bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), and fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), and main gates (gate 1), and a net pier (pier 7, structure 126).

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not initially used for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facility was used as support for a Small Craft Training Center, and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support U.S. Navy personnel whose ships were either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Long Beach Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense down-sized with the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural character.** Building 4, facing north, is significant as an example of the International Style, with its smooth concrete lines, ribbon windows, and flat roof.

2. **Condition of fabric:** Building 4 is in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall Dimensions:** Building 4 is rectangular and measures 47' in width by 88' in length. The high one-story building has a wing to the west and an ell with louvered vent extending from the southeast corner.

2. **Foundation:** Building 4 rests on a reinforced concrete pile foundation.

3. **Walls:** The walls of Building 4 are of reinforced concrete, 8" thick, with a 4' x 8' plywood form-board finish washed with ochre.

4. **Structural system, framing:** Building 4 uses a reinforced concrete post and beam structural system.

5. **Porches:** None

6. **Chimneys:** None

7. **Openings:**

   a. **Doorways and doors:** Building 4 has six exterior doors. The north side has two double steel doors: one with two 8" x 8" wire glass panes in the upper half and metal door knobs, and one painted white with modern aluminum pull handles. The south side has two single metal doors with wire glass upper panes. The east side has one metal door with a modern aluminum pull handle. The west side has a single door with a wire glass upper panel and a copper-plate door pull.

   b. **Windows:** All the windows are located on the north side. The main block has a multi-paned window wall of top-hinged transom windows with metal sash in groups of six, set in a projecting concrete frame. The west addition has a multi-paned window wall of wire glass top-hinged transom windows in metal sash, arranged in sets of four, and a four-pane ribbon window.

8. **Roof:**

   a. **Shape, covering:** The flat roof, of reinforced concrete slabs on a concrete frame, is covered with composition. Three large vent stacks and four metal vents pierce the roof.

   b. **Cornice, eaves:** None.

   c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** None.

C. **Description of Interior:**

1. **Floor plans:** The total square footage of Building 4 is 5,440. There are 11 rooms: three offices, two boiler rooms, three store rooms, a work room, a wash room and a bathroom.

2. **Stairways:** A series of open metal stairways with two-pipe rail balustrades lead to open metal catwalks extending through the main boiler room to service the equipment.

3. **Flooring:** The building has concrete floors. Set in the floor of the main block are 3/8" diamond plate steel covers over the pipe tunnels. The offices have linoleum tile with rubber baseboards

4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The walls are covered with exposed reinforced concrete. The offices have smooth concrete plaster, painted cream.

5. **Openings:** There are two openings through the main block to the addition, two metal doors with single glass panes to the office and bathroom and three solid metal doors into the storerooms in the stack ell.

6. **Decorative features and trim:** None.

7. **Hardware:** Two sets of window-crank gear to open the transom windows are located at the edges of the windows in the main block.

8. **Mechanical equipment:**

   a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The building was heated with a boiler.

   b. **Lighting:** The exterior has eight modern lamps: three on the north side, two each on the south and east sides, and one on the west side. All interior spaces have fluorescent lights.

   c. **Plumbing:** There is one bathroom in the building. It is not known whether the plumbing fixtures are original.

9. **Furnishings:** The main block has three large boilers with vent stacks, and the addition has a large boiler. The Boilers, produced by Erie City Ironworks, are Keystone models.

D. Site:

1. **General setting and orientation:** Building 4, facing north, is set back behind a grass lawn on the corner of Reeves Avenue and Colorado Street. To the north is a small parking lot in front of the main doors and Reeves Avenue, to the west is Colorado Street, to the east is a concrete driveway, and to the south is a parking lot.

2. **Historic landscape design:** The building's landscape is connected to the landscape design of buildings 1, 2, and 3, consisting of grass lawns and mature trees.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings

There are 47 drawings for Building 4 located at Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard archives. The original drawings date from June 7, 1941 and the alterations date to 1956-60 and to 1986. The relevant drawings for this documentation are:

#18139: Heating Plant
#26127: Elevation Repairs & Details
#35339: Heating Plant Floor Plan
#35349: Floor Plan & Details
#35350: Boiler House Elevation Section and Detail
#35362: Plans & Details
#35363: Plans & Details
#35395: Architectural Details F1
#35395: Architectural Details F2
#35396: Arch. Floor Plan & Details F1
#35396: Arch. Floor Plan & Details F2
#35348: Catwalk & Platform Details

B. Bibliography

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California.* Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.* San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

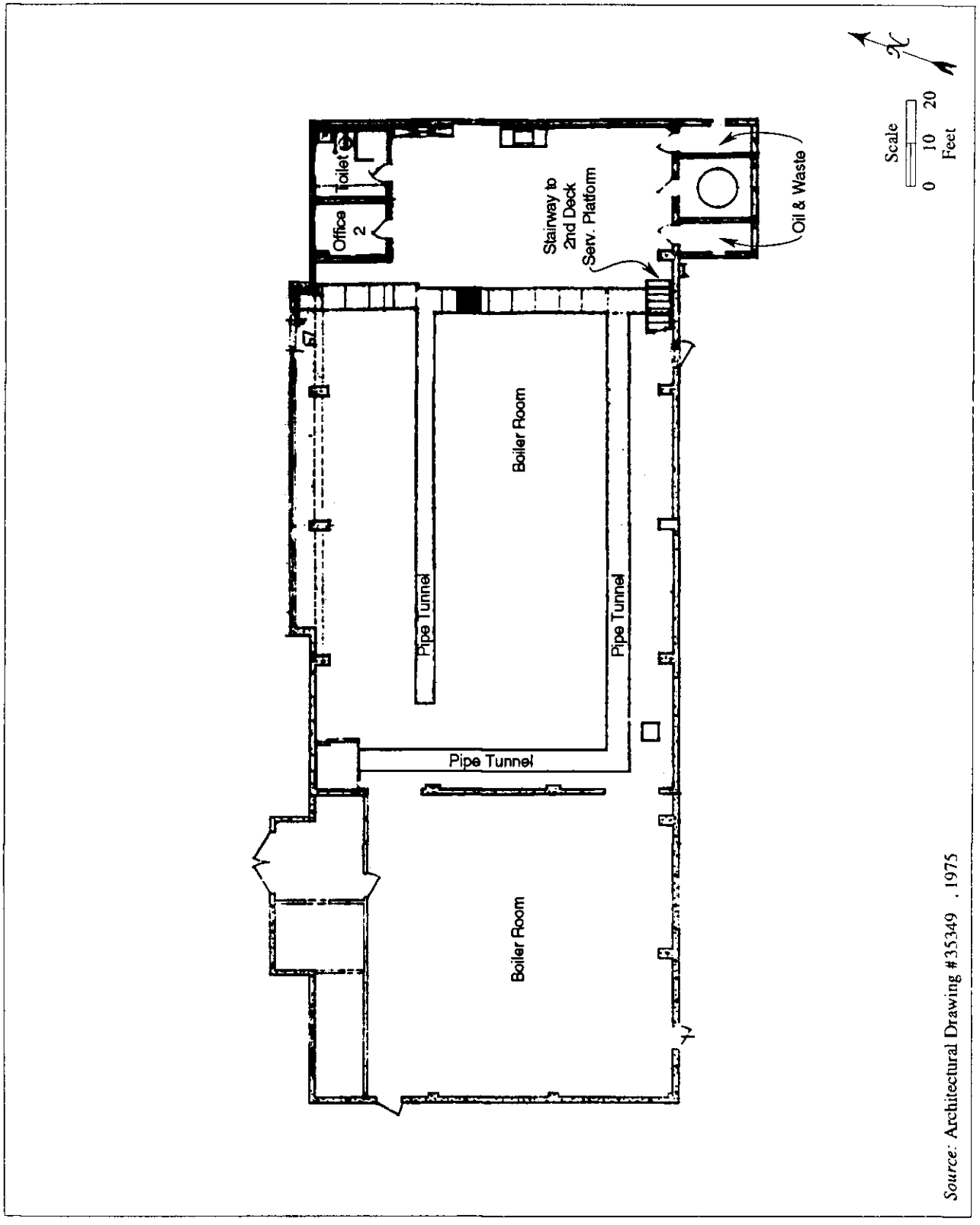
"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated _____1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.



LAYOUT OF BUILDING 4. 1996